

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 00137 191040Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 IO-13 MCT-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 SCS-03 A-01 AID-05 DHA-02 SCA-01 USIE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 INRE-00
NSCE-00 SY-05 EB-07 OC-06 CCO-00 EUR-12 /100 W
-----191100Z 094347 /23 10

O 190953Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9266
INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LOME IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 137

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, DM
SUBJECT: BENIN COUP ATTEMPT: UP-DATE TO 0800Z 19 JAN.

REF: STATE 012037

1. SWISS NATIONAL LIVING VERY NEAR AIRPORT HAS PASSED US INFORMATION THAT OUTLAW AIRCRAFT WHICH LANDED COTONOU MORNING JAN. 16 WAS AN ILYUSHIN-18. THIS WOULD AGREE WITH EARLIER EYEWITNESS REPORT FROM PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR LIVING NEAR AIRPORT THAT PLANE WAS A FOUR-ENGINE TURBO-PROP. FYI, PCD SAW PLANE'S COLOR AS WHITE, NOT SILVER, AND HAVING BLUE WINGS AND GREEN TAIL -- I.E., SAME COLORS AND PATTERN AS UTA A/C.

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2. INTERIOR MINISTER AZONHIHO'S GIRLFRIEND, WHO WORKS AT CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES, TOLD FATHER BISSON TUESDAY THAT THE GPRB HAD DEFINITELY IDENTIFIED THE ONE CAPTURED INVADER PICTURED IN MONDAY'S NEWSPAPERS AS A GUINEAN NATIONAL. SAME SOURCE REPORTS CACHE OF MERCENARY UNIFORMS FOUND IN HOTEL NOKOUE, AND THAT THAT HOTELS' OWNER HAS DISAPPEARED.

3. BRITISH NATIONAL, EMPLOYEE OF U.N., TOLD US THIS MORNING THAT HE SAW 19 WHITE AND 1 BLACK INVADERS WALKING CALMLY PAST HIS HOUSE TOWARD RPT TOWARD AIRPORT AT 0820 LOCAL SUNDAY, ONE OF THEM WITH LALKIE-TALKIE AND ONE WITH ARM NEATLY BANDAGED. HE INTERPRETED THIS AS INDICATING THEY WERE IN ORDERLY AND CALM RETREAT. THIS WOULD BE ONE HOUR FORTY MINUTES BEFORE PLANE WAS REPORTED TO HAVE LEFT, AND DISTANCE FROM POINT OF SIGHTING TO AIRPORT WOULD BE ABOUT TWO MILES.

4. WEDNESDAY'S NEWSPAPER CARRIES FRONT-PAGE PHOTOS OF 12 BENINESE WHO ARE BEING LOOKED FOR BY GPRB, WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO ANYONE SEEING THEM TO NOFIY GPRB AUTHORITIES. EMBASSY FSL THINKS MOST HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED AS ZINSOUIST PLOTTERS, PREVIOUSLY SOUGHT, AND PROBABLY ALL OUT OF COUNTRY.

5. EMBOFF IN COCOTIERS REPORTED AS OF 0900Z WEDNESDAY THAT GPRB MILITARY LINE THE STREETS OF HAIE VIVE, I.E., DISTRICT EAST OF AIRPORT WHERE SHOOTING BROKE OUT TUESDAY NOON. HE BELIEVES THEY PREPARING CONDUCT HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SEARCH.

6. GPRB MILITARY CONTINUE TO PASS EMBASSY ON SCOOTERS AND CARS IN NEVER-ENDING LINE, ALL CARRYING BRAND-NEW AK-47'S, BUT CIVILIAN POPULATION OUT IN GREATER NUMBER THAN YESTERDAY.

7. INFO ON WELFARE AMCITS AND OTHER NATIONALS FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.
LASOR

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, INVASIONS, TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 19-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977COTONO00137
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770019-1016
Format: TEL
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770138/aaaabhfu.tel
Line Count: 88
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 09f3a2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 12037
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3562402
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BENIN COUP ATTEMPT: UP-DATE TO 0800Z 19 JAN.
TAGS: PINS, PINT, DM
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/09f3a2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009